Pete Townshend’s Music Amplifies World Blood Donor Day Celebrations

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- Musician Pete Townshend has given permission for his classic song ‘Give Blood’ to be used for the first time to promote blood donation. Global Blood Fund, a charity focused on encouraging voluntary blood donation, has produced world-music interpretations in multiple languages for international use to inspire a new generation of blood donors.

- World Blood Donor Day on 14 June is one of only nine official WHO Global Health Days, celebrating each year the vital contributions of tens of millions of blood donors around the world in enabling hospital procedures and saving lives. This year’s event is especially important as the global pandemic has devastated worldwide blood collection.

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London, England; Oklahoma, US and Worldwide - To celebrate World Blood Donor Day on 14 June, the charity Global Blood Fund (GBF) has released multiple interpretations of Pete Townshend's song 'Give Blood', performed by leading musicians from around the world. Set to video to encourage sharing on social media and through other channels, these are being donated by the charity free-of-charge to blood services in low and middle-income countries throughout Africa, Latin America and the Middle-East for use on and around World Blood Donor Day.

Pete Townshend, guitarist and principal songwriter for the legendary rock band *The Who* comments; “Although it is now more than 35 years since I wrote the song ‘Give Blood’, this is the first time it has actually been used to encourage donation. Shortage of blood around the world is a huge issue, particularly in poorer countries, and so I was delighted to give permission for Global Blood Fund to use my work to help communicate the need for more donors to come forward.”

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that the minimum number of units of blood needed to sustain an adequate level of health equals 1% of a nation's population – 10 units per 1000 people. Yet many poorer countries fall well short of this goal. The lack of infrastructure and equipment for collection and processing of blood components is a key impediment to providing a sustainable blood supply, as is a severe shortage of volunteer donors. Though blood and safe transfusion services are essential parts of any strong health system, the safety, sustainability and adequacy of blood remains a major health challenge for numerous countries.

GBF’s Executive Director, Gavin Evans, explains the thinking behind the approach. “Each year it becomes harder for messages about the importance of blood donation to cut through to the public, even though tens of thousands tragically die because of blood shortages. But with music such an influential part of people’s lives – especially in many of those countries that struggle most to collect enough blood – for 2021 we are using lyrics and melody to highlight the extraordinary impact of donor generosity. Not only do these individuals help save the lives of those in need of a blood transfusion, but the benefit to family, friends and the wider community of helping that patient recover is also profound. Using music as the medium, we think we have some really powerful messaging - and a great set of songs that people will enjoy in their own right.”

Working closely with national and regional blood services around the world, the music tracks will be released through multiple channels in the run up to 14 June, with national blood services encouraged to ‘get creative’ in how they use materials; as young donors in Bungoma County in Kenya did here and in Cameroon here.

Evans adds; “Our hope is that thousands of new life-saving blood donors will come forward in all the countries using these materials.”

The following versions of the song, which are featured in a purpose-made video, are being released:

- African English
- African English (alternative)

Media:



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- African French
- Arabic
- Spanish
- UK English

As well as YouTube links above, all materials can also be accessed via https://globalbloodfund.org/wbdd-resources/

About Global Blood Fund

GBF is a charity registered in Oklahoma, US, and England, UK. Each year around 120 million units of blood are collected worldwide, but poorer parts of the world – home to 84% of the population – collect only just over half of this. Shortages in low-HDI countries are common and lack of availability for transfusion leads to tens of thousands of premature deaths; particularly among young children experiencing complications from malaria and mothers in childbirth. GBF aims to re-balance these inequalities. It does this by providing training, equipment, money and other forms of support. It is particularly focused on encouraging voluntary donation, recognized by the WHO as the most effective and cost-efficient of all possible interventions. More at https://globalbloodfund.org/

For Further Information

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Press Officers at local blood collection agencies can provide additional regional context

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